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Self-Directed Wellness Practice: Aerobic Exercise

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Introduction

Stress has become a common part of the modern day, impacting individuals with different backgrounds and experiences. As the demands of daily life increase, life stressors begin to accumulate. Finding effective strategies to reduce the impact of stress and improve well-being is important. This proposal outlines the importance of understanding the positive impact of aerobic exercise on reducing life stressors and improving overall well-being.

Research has suggested that aerobic exercise is a promising avenue for the reduction of stress and improving well-being. Studies have indicated that even short bouts of aerobic exercise have a significant calming effect which can last for hours (Bernstein & McNally, 2017). This is important in helping establish the idea that this wellness practice can be achievable for a wide variety of individuals. Studies in both humans and animals show that aerobic exercise induces physiological and neurological changes that can explain stress reduction (Jackson, 2013). Engaging in regular aerobic activity can enhance emotional well-being and resilience, according to literature. Longitudinal studies have helped demonstrate that individuals who exercise regularly experience lower levels of depression, emphasizing the mental benefits of aerobic exercise (Chen & Nakagawa, 2023).

This proposal aims to introduce the idea of aerobic exercise as a well-being practice. Analyzing evidence from scientific, peer-reviewed articles, this investigation works to establish the credibility and effectiveness of aerobic exercise in reducing the impact of life stressors and improving overall well-being. This proposal aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the physiological and psychological foundations that make aerobic exercise an effective self-directed approach to managing stress and improving well-being. This proposal will analyze scientific literature supporting the positive effects of aerobic exercise, discuss physiological and neurological changes induced by exercise, and examine the mental benefits that make aerobic exercise a valuable self-directed strategy for stress management.

Rational Based on Scientific Literature

Aerobic Exercise Impact on Life-stressors

Aerobic exercise has been proven to decrease the effects of life stressors. Studies have indicated that people have reported feeling calmer after just 20-to-30 minutes of aerobic exercise, and this calmness has been reported to last several hours after the initial exercise (Jackson, 2013). This implies that not only is aerobic exercise a good wellness practice for offsetting life stressors, but it also can be completed quickly, with only short bouts of exercise needed to feel the calming effects.

To continue, regularly participating in aerobic activity shows resilience against prolonged and excessive emotional reactions to life stressors (Bernstein & McNally, 2017). Being able to incorporate aerobic exercise into one's life as a wellness practice will build resistance against the negative effects of life stressors and will help one become more mindful. Results from studies have shown that negativity which may be lingering from a stressor can become diminished with a session of aerobic activity (Bernstein & McNally, 2017). This indicates that exercise can be used as a healthy way of coping with life stressors.

These studies imply that not only is the incorporation of exercise as a wellness practice a good way to buffer the impacts of life stressors, but it also promotes mindfulness. Engaging in aerobic exercise serves as a constructive, healthy coping mechanism. This wellness practice has been proven to effectively diminish lingering negativity and promote overall emotional, mental, and physical well-being.

The Bodies Adaptations to Aerobic Exercise

Stress is a common occurrence, and studies have shown that individuals who experience acute episodic or chronic episodes of stress are more likely to develop stress-related health problems (Jackson, 2013). Incorporating aerobic exercise into the lifestyle may help with decreasing the chances of developing health problems related to stress. Not only does aerobic exercise help decrease life stressors, but it has also been proven that there is a positive association between this form of exercise and improved cognitive functioning and reduced

cognitive impairment (Chen & Nakagawa, 2023). This is crucial as it implies that not only is aerobic exercise beneficial for decreasing life stressors and improving well-being, but it also has cognitive benefits.

Even single episodes of physical activity have been shown to improve cognitive functions and enhance memory (Chen & Nakagawa, 2023). It has been reported that during physical activity, the body makes several adaptations to enhance physical activity, benefit the brain and contribute to enhanced exercise performance. Results show that physical fitness is associated with the working memory and task-switching ability. Individuals who incorporated aerobic exercise into their lives were more accurate and adept at shifting and updating working memory, even when stressful stimuli were at play (Bernstein & McNally, 2017).

The evidence supporting the cognitive benefits of even a single episode of aerobic activity underscores the impact of exercise on cognitive functions and memory. These findings suggest that aerobic exercise not only contributes to long-term cognitive enhancements but also provides immediate benefits when faced with stress. Understanding how the brain and body adapt to aerobic exercise is crucial as it can motivate individuals to engage in even short bouts of exercise as a practical and readily accessible strategy for optimizing cognitive performance, overall well-being, and reducing stress.

Accessibility of Aerobic Exercise

Aerobic exercise is defined as a physical activity which increases one's heart rate and how much oxygen is used to produce energy. In saying this, this form of exercise can be accessed in many ways and by many different people. For example, parking your car far away in the work parking lot and briskly walking into work, or even opting to take the stairs instead of an escalator or elevator would help increase one's heart rate. The gym isn’t the only way to increase heart

rate, and making simple choices such as these has been proven to be beneficial when it comes to decreasing life stressors and improving mindset (Jackson, 2013). As proven in multiple articles, it is evident that short bouts of physical activity, even after one time are proven to help decrease the feelings associated with stress. It is important when starting aerobic exercise to set realistic goals, starting with small steps, and gradually increasing the intensity and duration of the exercise. This creates a positive mindset towards aerobic exercise and reduces the likelihood of burnout.

Encouraging individuals to find enjoyable and sustainable forms of aerobic exercise that can accommodate their busy schedules reinforces the idea that every movement counts towards overall health. This is crucial in helping individuals understand the benefits of aerobic exercise. Fostering a positive attitude towards aerobic exercise can enhance overall well-being and help reduce life stressors.

Discussion

In summary, this proposal highlights the significance of aerobic exercise as a practical and accessible strategy for reducing life stressors and improving well-being. Scientific literature consistently supports the positive impact of even short bouts of aerobic activity. The physiological and psychological changes induced by aerobic exercise contribute not only to immediate calming effects but also to long-term emotional resilience. Additionally, the cognitive benefits identified further enhance its value in promoting well-being. The accessibility of aerobic exercise, achievable through simple lifestyle choices, underscores its practicality as a self-directed approach to managing stress. In a world where stress is pervasive, these findings emphasize the importance of integrating aerobic exercise into daily life for improved mental and physical health.

When considering the effectiveness of this wellness practice it is crucial to have a way to measure its effectiveness in the future. Using a comprehensive approach for measurement is ideal as it considers both qualitative and quantitative measures. Quantitatively, health assessments including cardiovascular markers and fitness data would help offer insight into the effectiveness of aerobic exercise. Combining this with qualitative measures such as interviews and focus groups would help provide a valuable approach to measuring the effectiveness of aerobic exercise. Using longitudinal studies will also help in providing a thorough understanding of effectiveness on health and stressors. These practices aim to measure the effectiveness of aerobic exercise on stress reduction, mental health, and overall well-being.

References

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